

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EB-08 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 H-01 /036 W
-----181328Z 120736 /45

R 180905Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 529
INFO AMCONSUL KADUNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, CASC, NI

SUBJECT: BUSINESS TRAVEL

REF: (A) STATE 60435 (NOTAL) (B) LAGOS 3126

1. SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT ONLY 20-25 AMERICANS JAILED PAST TWO YEARS OUT OF THOUSANDS HERE. SHOULD ALSO BE EMPHASIZED THAT ALL RPT ALL WERE ADULT MALES AND NONE RPT NONE SEVERELY PHYSICALLY MISTREATED, ALTHOUGH MANY WERE HARASSED, EMBARRASSED OR FRIGHTENED. AUTHORITIES TREAT WESTERNERS BETTER THAN AFRICAN MAJOR CAUSE FOR CONCERN IN SECURITY ARRESTS IS FACT THAT IT MAY BE SOME TIME BEFORE EMBASSY LEARNS OF INCIDENT SINCE FMG NOTORIOUSLY NEGIGENT IN NOTIFYING EMBASSY OF ARRESTS.

2. MAJOR CAUSE OF PROBLEMS IS PHOTOGRAPHY. THERE NOT RPT NO ABSOLUTEBAN BUT NO RPT NO CLEAR RULES EITHER, THEREFORE IT BEST LEAVE CAMERA AT HOME. OBVIOUSLY STRATEGIC INSTALLATIONS SUCH AS AIRPORTS, PORTS, MILITARY FACILITIES, INDUSTRIES, ETC., FORBIDDEN FOR PHOTOGRAPHS BUT VISITORS HAVE ALSO BEEN HARASSED OR DETAINED FOR TAKING PICTURES OF EMBASSY, BUSINESS DISTRICT, STREET HAWKERS (AT HAWKER'S REQUEST), ETC. IF NECESSARY TO PHOTOGRAPH ASK NEAREST POLICEMAN FIRST.

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3. DO'S:
A. ALWAYS LET SOME CLOSE ASSOCIATE KNOW ITINERARY OR WHEREABOUTS WITH INSTRUCTIONS START CHECKING AND NOTIFY EMBASSY IF UNDULY OVERDUE. THIS IS HOW EMBASSY LEARNS OF MOST ARRESTS. EMBASSY ITSELF UNABLE TO TRACK VISITORS AS THEY ARE TOO MANY.
B. IF DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED, BE POLITE, SYMPATHETIC TO FACT

THAT OFFICER UNSURE OF HIMSELF. AND FIRM IN REQUESTING SEE SENIOR OFFICER OR EMBASSY OFFICIAL. CONTROL TEMPER, AVOID SEEMING TO THREATEN OR DENIGRATE OFFICER. IGNORE INSULTING BEHAVIOR AS THIS IS STYLE, NOTHING PERSONAL. IN ARGUMENTATION MAKE ONE POINT AT A TIME TO AVOID CONFUSING AND FURTHER IRRITATING OFFICIAL.

FRIENDLY, SMILING DEMEANOR USUALLY HELPS. THERE IS A 50-50 CHANCE OF TALKING OFFICER OUT OF DETENTION.

C. IF DETAINED, THERE NO RPT NO CAUSE FOR PANIC. CHIEF COMPLAINTS OF DETAINEES HAVE BEEN PRISON FOOD AND INABILITY COMMUNICATE OUTSIDE OR WITH RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS. ONE DETAINEE HELD 16 DAYS, NEVER INTERROGATED, RELEASED WITHOUT EXPLANATION. ASK TO SEE OR COMMUNICATE WITH EMBASSY OR CONSULAR OFFICIAL, POINTING OUT NIGERIA'S COMMITMENT UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW TO GRANT PROMPT CONSULAR ACCESS.

TRY TO ASCERTAIN LOCATION OF OR LANDMARKS AROUND DETENTION SITE. PERSIST IN EFFORTS SEE HIGHEST OFFICIALS POSSIBLE AS MIDDLE AND LOWER OFFICIALS USUALLY UNABLE TAKE DECISIONS. IF INITIAL REQUESTS COMPLETELY IGNORED, ONE PLOY USED SUCCESSFULLY BY EMBASSY OFFICIAL WAS TO CONVINCE JAILERS IT NECESSARY RETURN TO RESIDENCE TO OBTAIN MEDICATION VITAL FOR CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION (HEART TROUBLE, DIABETES, ETC.). OBVIOUSLY THIS MUST BE USED EARLY. IF SUCCESSFUL, MESSAGE CAN USUALLY BE PASSED TO SERVANT OR HOTEL EMPLOYEES TO CONTACT EMBASSY OR ASSOCIATES. ANOTHER PLOY MIGHT BE TO CITE NEED TO RETURN TO ILL DEPENDENTS. SHOULD ALSO ENSURE THAT ANY FELLOW DETAINEES BEING RELEASED CARRY MESSAGES.

5. LESS SERIOUS PROBLEMS SOMETIMES ENCOUNTERED HERE ARE (1) SHAKEDOWNS, (2) IMPERSONATORS. ALTHOUGH LESS FREQUENT RECENTLY, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POLICE AND OTHER OFFICIALS AT ONE TIME WERE AGGRESSIVELY SEEKING BRIBES FROM FOREIGNERS FOR PETTY OR EVEN IMAGINARY VIOLATIONS OF TRAFFIC, CUSTOMS OR HEALTH REGULATIONS, OFTEN WITH TACIT APPROVAL THEIR SUPERIORS. ALTHOUGH THEY SATISFIED WITH FIVE NAIRA, THEY CAPABLE OF DEMANDING FAR MORE. IF OFFENSE CLEARLY TRUMPED-UP, BEST RESPONSE IS TO OUTWAIT ADVERSARY--WESTINGHOUSE REP HERE READ BOOK SEVERAL HOURS IN STATION HOUSE WHEN POLICE DETAINED HIM ON FALSE CHARGE OF CAUSING TRAFFIC JAM. PRIVATE CITIZENS OCCASIONALLY IMPERSONATE POLICEMEN IN EFFORT OBTAIN BRIBE FROM MOTORISTS; ALWAYS REQUEST CREDENTIALS.

4. ABOVE SHOULD NOT BE VOLUNTEERED IN FULL DETAIL TO BUSINESS-MEN BUT USED ON AS-APPROPRIATE BASIS. ALL BRIEFINGS, HOWEVER, SHOULD ROUTINELY INCLUDE GENERAL CAUTION ON PHOTOGRAPHY AND ON NEED EXERCISE PATIENCE WITH PETTY OFFICIALDOM.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CITIZEN PROTECTION, DETENTION
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 18-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LAGOS04248
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770133-1123
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770447/aaaabowx.tel
Line Count: 113
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f2763aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION COME
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 60435, 77 LAGOS 3126
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2777491
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BUSINESS TRAVEL
TAGS: BEXP, CASC, NI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f2763aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009